

Against the Tide

Chapter One

1) How do we get beyond our emotions when we are so hurt we are feeling it in the “pit of our stomach”?

By making “faith choices” or non-feeling choices that allow God to change our emotions and align them with our choices of faith.

2) Isn't making a non-feeling choice to follow what God would have us to do, simply faking it? Do faith choices really count?

When we don't feel our choices, as physical beings we don't think they are genuine. However in God's kingdom, this is not the case. As Christians, we possess the authority to choose to go against the tide of self-centeredness, and choose God's will. So, yes, in God's eyes, faith choices do count, are genuine and are all God needs to accomplish His will through us.

3) Why are our thoughts and emotions so important? Why are they often called the “movers of our soul”?

The reason our thoughts and emotions are so important is because they trigger the “chain reaction” of our souls. Our thoughts stir up our emotions; our emotions influence our desires (or our choices) and our choices produce our lives. Our days are often defined by “how we feel.”

4) Do your own thoughts and emotions carry that much weight? How do you personally control them? How do you manage to get beyond them?

5) Bottom line: How are we able to go against the tide of our own thinking and feeling, in order to choose God's will?

By learning we have the authority and the power to give our natural (self-centered and often sinful) thoughts over to the Lord and that He will take them “as far as the east is from the west.” By confessing them, by changing our mind about following them and by laying them at the Cross, by faith we can go against the tide of emotion and choose God's will.

6) What makes Anna's story (on page 9-12) so miraculous?

In spite of what she thought and felt, she chose by faith to do God's will, which then allowed God to intervene and change, not only her heart, but also Kena's.

7) As Christians, don't we just automatically have God's Love since Christ lives in us?

Yes, we always have His Love in our hearts, but our own hurts, unforgiveness, bitterness (sin) quenches and blocks that Love from coming forth.

8) How can we allow God's Love to come forth in all situations?

By learning to give our real feelings (those that might naturally quench God's Love) and thoughts over to God and choosing by faith, to follow His will. He, then, will align our feelings with the choices we have made and make us genuine.

9) What does the word "to deny" really mean?

It does not mean to push down, bury and hide our real feelings or negate their existence. It simply means to bar ourselves from following what we naturally think and feel.

10) Do non-believers possess the authority to go against how they feel or what they think in order to make a faith choice?

No. Non-believers do not possess another power source (another spirit) within them in order to perform anything different than what they think and feel.

11) Most Christians would agree (at least intellectually) that we have not been called to simply "gain knowledge" about Christ, but to gain more of His Life to give to others. Why, then, are we not seeing this happening in the Christian body? In your opinion, what is the ingredient that is missing?

12) What does the First Commandment really mean: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your *heart, mind and soul*?"

It's simply saying we are to surrender our entire being to Him, our heart, mind and soul. By giving Him our own thoughts, emotions and desires, He then will give us His Life, His wisdom, His Love and His power.

13) Does this exchange of life happen automatically?

No. It all depends upon our own moment by moment choices. Isaiah 59:2 says that "our iniquities have separated us from "God." If we choose to relinquish our sin and self and become a cleansed vessel, then God's Life can come forth from our hearts.

14) Are you willing to go against the tide of your own emotions and choose by faith to follow Christ? Are you willing to tear up that long list of justified hurts and choose instead to do what God wants? Are you willing to unconditionally forgive that person who has betrayed you and choose to give yourself over to the Lord? You have the authority to do these things. But, it all depends upon your own choice.

Read John 12:24-25

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Chapter Two

1) Why is our free will the most important element of our make up?

Our free will is critical because within our will lies the authority to make a non-emotional choice. The freedom to follow Christ over what our emotions are telling us. Our will is the master of all our faculties and upon it depends everything else. It controls our reason, our intelligence, our emotions and our abilities.

2) Have you recognized the importance of your own free will? Explain. Why is our free will so important to God?

Unless we choose by an act of our will to do His will, God is unable to work through us. We must cooperate with Him. He has not set Himself up as a divine dictator, but rather as a loving Father. He has given us the choice to either follow Him or deny Him. This is not a one time choice, but a continual choice. (Matthew 26:39)

3) The character of our Christian life is determined by what?

It is determined by the daily choices we make. Sin is birthed in our will. It begins in our mind, but then is implemented and carried out by our will.

4) Define the new “supernatural willpower” that we receive as a result of being born again. Do you rely upon this kind of will power in your own life?

It's God's authority enabling us to choose His will over our own and also, His power enabling us to carry out and perform that will in our lives.

5) What is the Greek word that stands for “free choice”? What exactly does it mean and why is it so important to understand?

The Greek word is *exousia* and it means “it is permitted.” It's important to understand this word because it's the basis upon which we have God's authority and power to make choices to do His will, regardless of how we feel.

6) Have you made these kind of faith choices? Give an example of where your emotions were pushing you to do one thing, but you choose instead to do God's will.

7) Where is the battle between the flesh and the Spirit won or lost? Explain why?

The battleground between the flesh and the spirit is in our will. Our choice to follow our own thoughts and emotions over what God has prompted, is where God's Spirit gets quenched and sin results. (Romans 14:23)

8) Why is loving God with all our willpower the “key” to walking by the Spirit?

It’s the key, because our “faith choices” allow God’s Spirit to come forth from our hearts and fill our lives. Whereas, our emotional choices do just the opposite. They quench God’s Spirit and force us to walk by the flesh.

9) Our willpower is where the battle between the spirit and the flesh is fought. Why? Give an example.

Our daily moment by moment choices are what determine whose life will be lived in our soul—God’s or our own. Thus, the war that goes on between the power of sin and the power of God is waged in willpower, but manifested in our souls and bodies

10) Are you willing to set aside what you think, what you want and what you feel, and choose to do what God wants? Share your answer.

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Chapter Three

1) What are the two parts that make up our supernatural will power? Why is the second part of our willpower the most critical?

First, we have God's supernatural will and power, where He counsels us as to what His will is and then, gives us the authority to choose it. The second part of our willpower is our own free choice. This is the freedom to say "yes" to following His will and allowing Him to perform it in our lives or the freedom to say "no" and do what we want.

2) God also has two kinds of will. What are they and, in your own words, tell how they affect us?

God's two kinds of will are His emotional desires—that which He takes pleasure in; and then, His planned purposes.

3) As Christians, we also have two kinds of will. What are they and give an example of each in your own life.

- 1) Our own natural, emotional will
- 2) Our disciplined willing, i.e., "faith choices"

4) Why are emotional choices often stronger than faith choices? What happens, however, if we follow them?

Emotional choices are intensely felt and we want to follow them. Faith choices are difficult because they go against every natural feeling in us. If we follow them, however, we will end up in the clutches of Satan and in total bondage to our flesh.

5) Explain how our will power is the passageway, doorway or gateway for God's Life to flow out into our own lives. What closes that doorway and what keeps it open?

God's Life is in our hearts. When we make faith choices by our willpower to follow God's will regardless of how we feel, His Life is freed to come forth. When we refuse to do His will and we make emotional choices to follow our own will and desires, we block God Life from coming forth. Faith choices allow God's Life to flow; emotional choices quench His Life.

6) What does Scripture say is the only way to experiencing real Life (John 12:24). Give a personal example.

Only by choosing to set aside our own thoughts, emotions and desires (self) can God's real Life (His Love, wisdom and power) come forth.

7) What is the definition of a mature Christian? Tell what maturity in Christ is not!

A mature Christian is one who recognizes his self life (his sin and self) and makes the appropriate choices to give it over to God. A mature Christian is *not* one who simply knows the Bible backwards and forwards, but doesn't live it; one who goes to church regularly, but doesn't love others; one who teaches Bible Studies, but walks without God's wisdom; or even one who writes theological books, but doesn't show Christ in his life. A mature Christian can be all of the above, *if* he chooses to continually cleanse himself of all that God shows him and allows His Life to come forth in all he does.

8) How can you tell one is a mature Christian?

By how loving they are; how sensitive they are to their own sin; and by how much they allow the Spirit to direct their lives.

9) What does the term "spirit control" really mean? Have you experienced this personally? Share.

Spirit control means "power to rein in" or mastery over self. God's Spirit gives us the power to rein in our self life so that Christ Life can come forth. Luke 21:19 tells us that we can "rein in our souls" by the Spirit of God in us.

10) God tells us we must be "be prepared" or "be equipped" for His soon return. What exactly does this mean?

Being prepared simply means daily "putting off" our sin and self (the old man) and "putting on" Christ (the new man). Not only making a faith choice to do this, but also a faith walk besides.

11) How much do you trust God to do these things in your life? Enough to lay everything down? Share your thoughts.

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Chapter Four

1) Why, again, is our thinking so very important? Why does God put so much emphasis on it throughout the Bible? (2 Corinthians 10:5)

Our thoughts are the first to be triggered in the chain reaction of our soul. Thoughts stir up our emotions; our emotions influence our choices; and our choices produce our actions. Therefore, the battle for our lives is waged in our thinking. Whoever controls our minds, ultimately controls our lives.

2) Describe, as best you can, or draw a simple chart to define what our minds are. Contrast a believer's mind with a non-believers.

3) What, then, does single-mindedness mean? Draw a diagram of a single-minded person. Are you single-minded?

It means being one souled—only one life is being lived. God's Life is freely coming forth from our hearts and producing godly life actions. A single-minded person is one who follows what God thinks and desires over our own.

4) Contrast what a double-minded person does. Draw a diagram of a double-minded person. Are you double-minded?

Double-mindedness means being twice souled. It means living two lives. God's Life is still in our hearts, but it has been quenched by our own self-life. A double-minded person is one who follows what he thinks and feels over what God desires.

5) Double-mindedness is the enemies game plan. Why?

He knows double-mindedness will immediately quench God's Life in us and the Gospel will not be able to be passed on. Every kingdom divided against itself will fall. (Luke 11:17)

6) What does the Scripture 2 Corinthians 11:3 really mean? Have you ever been deceived like this?

“Simplicity” means singleness of mind. Paul is saying, just as Satan tricked Eve in her thinking, so he fears we can also be deceived and corrupted from our singleness of mind. And, it's true. Many of us have been.

7) Luke 11:33-36 perfectly describes single-mindedness and double-mindedness. Explain.

Jesus' Life is the light Luke is talking about. Our goal and purpose is not only to be filled with that light, but also to let that light shine out to others. That light is not to be hidden under a bushel, but put on a lamp stand so all can see it.

8) What does "Spirit-filled" really mean. Does this only happen once? Have you been Spirit-filled?

Just as Solomon's Temple was filled from the inside out, this is exactly God's purpose for our lives. Not just once, but over and over and over again—daily, moment-by-moment.

9) What is the "key" to being able to do the above, stay Spirit-filled? (Ephesians 5:17-18)

Simply, being willing. Being ready to act without hesitation.

10) In your opinion, are only some Christians capable of laying their lives down before the Lord or are *all* Christians capable of this? Explain.

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Chapter Five

1) We have been so programmed to feel everything we choose. When we don't feel our choices, we don't think they are real. Do you experience this? What did you do? Share an example.

2) Is "faith" a feeling?

No. Faith is the ability to see everything that happens through God's eyes, from His perspective. Faith is made up of a thousand non-feeling choices a day. Only through faith will everything eventually be turned to sight and understanding. (Hebrews 11) Only faith can give us the strength to lay aside our own agenda and choose to stand on the foundation that is in Christ.

3) Define the "flesh."

The "flesh" is everything that occurs in our soul (our thoughts, emotions and desires) and body (our actions) that is not of the Spirit and not of faith.

4) How often must we choose to follow the Spirit? Can we just choose once a day—perhaps first thing in the morning—and sail through the day?

A faith walk is just that—a faith walk. It takes our moment-by-moment choice to be filled with God's Spirit. It's not just a one time event.

5) One of the most exciting things about the Christian walk is that when we make faith choices, God will align our feelings with what we have chosen. Explain how this works. Give an example.

We make that faith choice to unconditionally follow Christ. We choose to lay our self down. God then aligns our feelings. In other words, He changes our feelings to match what we have chosen. (Mark 9:24)

6) What happens when our feelings don't align with what we have chosen? What does this mean? Have you ever experienced this?

Sometimes God aligns our feelings immediately. And that's wonderful. Other times, however, it takes days or weeks to feel what we have chosen. This is the time we must walk "by faith" and do what God has asked, without feeling anything. The amount of time it takes to align our feelings with our faith choice, seems to depend upon how deep the "wound" (that issue that we gave to the Lord) was. In other words, how long it has been in us, festering. It seems the deeper the hurt, the longer it takes to align our feelings. I call the in between time my "holding pattern."

7) When is the most vulnerable time for us in the process of giving our thoughts and feelings to God? Do you have a personal example of this?

The most vulnerable time for us in the process of giving things to God is when our feelings don't align for awhile with the faith choices we have made. This often makes us think that God is not faithful and that He hasn't taken our real thoughts and feelings.

8) What is the most important step in this whole process– the first basic step?

Knowing God loves us is the most important part of the whole process. If we really know this, we won't fear what God might allow in our lives. We have the confidence to continually abandon our lives into His care. If we don't really know that He loves us, we will be unable to relinquish our lives to Him on a daily basis.

9) Why is it so important to know that He loves us?

Then, we will have the confidence to continually lay our lives down before Him. We can't lay our lives down to someone if we don't think they love us.

10) What is the cycle of defeat “chain reaction” that can occur in so many of our lives when we doubt God's Love? Has this ever happened to you?

Because we doubt His Love,
We won't be able to trust Him,
Which prevents us from laying our wills & our lives down
Which stops us from making faith choices
Which pushes us to following our own thoughts &
emotions
Which makes the situation we are in intolerable
Which makes us overwhelmed
And the enemy rejoices!

11) What does God's “severe mercy” really mean? (Rom.11:22) Have you ever experienced this?

It means not only being loved with God's compassionate and longsuffering Love, but also with His strict and discipline Love. Both are *Agape* Love.

12) Do you have an “intimate relationship” with the Lord. What exactly does this mean?

It means to know Him personally and intimately. To have a living experience with Him. To see and experience His Life working through us. It's knowing that everything in our lives is Father-filtered.

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Chapter Six

1) What is the danger of following emotional choices? Can you give a personal example?

Emotional choices often lead to a quenching of the Spirit, a letting go of God's hand, bad things happening, blaming God and ending up being angry with God and eventually, in a total apostasy situation.

2) Following emotional choices not only quench God's Spirit, but cause other critical things to occur? What are they?

When we make emotional choices that quench God's Spirit, we block God's Love not only for us personally, but also through us to others. The Lord's wisdom and His power will also be negated when we are in the flesh.

3) What exactly is "sin"?

Sin is anything that causes us to be separated from God. It's anything that is not of faith. (Isaiah 59:2) These things (sin) cover our hearts and form a barrier or a blockage that prohibits God's Life from coming forth.

4) When do negative thoughts become "sin"?

The first thought that comes into our mind is not sin. The sin enters when we choose to follow that negative and act upon it. Even if we choose to entertain that thought and mull it over, it will quench God's Spirit.

5) What happens when we share ungodly thoughts with others?

We not only contaminate them, we also reprogram those bad thoughts back down in the hidden part of our soul, again stirring up our emotions and desires.

6) Define the "power of sin."

It's an energy force that dwells in our unredeemed bodies whose whole intent and purpose is to cause us to veer off course and miss the mark (being conformed into Christ's image so we can eventually, rule and reign with Christ in the coming Millennial kingdom.

7) Does Satan have access to our new spirit and heart? Explain.

No. These areas are inviolate. Satan has access only to our unredeemed flesh (our soul and body). And, only if we give it to him.

8) What is God's purpose in calling us. (Romans 12:1-2)

To be conformed into Christ's image so that we may rule and reign with Christ in the coming Millennium.

9) Are you aware of your own sin? Are you aware when you get angry, hurt, fearful, insecure, resentful, doubtful, etc.? What do you do about these things? Explain.

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Chapter Seven

1) What do we do with the “justified” negative thoughts that constantly bombard us? What are our three choices?

We can vent them to others; we can stuff them down in the hidden part of our soul; or, we can choose by faith to give them to God and be rid of them forever.

2) Do un-dealt with thoughts and emotions influence our actions? Share an example from the Bible.

3) What happens if we bury, hide or push down our real thoughts and feelings?

These buried things will affect and influence our life just as much as conscious negative feelings. They need to be brought forth and given to the Lord before they lead us to make wrong choices that will quench God’s Life in us.

4) Name the four steps of cleansing. What Biblical foundations are these steps based upon?

They are based upon the actual cleansing and purifying steps the priests of Solomon’s Temple took in order to deal with their sin and be reconciled to God: 1) Recognizing and acknowledging our sin and self; 2) Confessing and repenting of all that God shows us; 3) giving God all of it (laying it on the Altar); 4) Replace the lies with God’s Word.

5) Why is step #1–recognizing our sin and self–so very important? Have you done this?

It’s a critical step because we can’t give something over to God if we really don’t know what it is. God has to reveal it to us first.

6) Are we to relive these negative experiences?

No. We just must acknowledge what God has revealed to us as the “root cause” of what is affecting us today.

7) Why is it so important to understand what the “root cause” is? Can you give a personal example.

It’s important because once the hidden root is exposed, God’s truth can be put back in.

8) The second part of step #2–unconditionally forgiving those who have hurt us–is difficult. What does this really mean?

It simply means we are releasing that other person into God's hands so that He can deal with them as He knows best and so that He can judge them righteously.

9) Why is step #4—read God's Word and replace the lies with the truth—so important? What happens if we don't do this? Has this ever happened to you?

We must replace the lies with the truth (Ephesians 5:26) so that more lies don't come back and the later state becomes worse than the first.

10) After we have acknowledged, confessed, repented, given to God and replaced the Word, what might we do next?

The answer is “worship the Lord.” We must be a cleansed vessel in order to truly worship Him. Worship means to “prostrate oneself.” It shows our true submission. Then, we can pray our prayers and petitions.

Are you willing to be a Hosea? Are you willing to moment by moment allow God to use your life to reach others?